

MARYLAND DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES

Committed to Excellence in Public Service

WHAT IS THE MARYLAND DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES?

The Maryland Disability Determination Services (DDS) is a State agency within the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) under the State Department of Education. Using Social Security Administration (SSA) regulations, the DDS examiners, staff physicians, and staff psychologists determine the eligibility of Maryland applicants for the two disability programs administered by SSA:

- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) provides cash benefits to insured workers who meet the definition of disability and to their dependents; and
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides monthly cash benefits to children and adults who meet the definition of disability, as well as certain income and resource guidelines.

Applicants for SSDI and SSI file for benefits at local SSA offices. If the work credit (SSDI) or income/resource criteria (SSI) are met, the case file is sent to the DDS for the development of medical evidence and for a determination of disability.

SSA'S DEFINITION OF DISABILITY:

An adult is considered disabled if he/she is unable to engage in any substantial gainful work activity because of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment which is expected to last for 12 continuous months or result in death.

A child under age 18 is considered disabled if he/she has a medically determinable physical or mental impairment or

combination of impairments that causes marked and severe functional limitations and can be expected to result in death or has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE DDS?

- Disability claim is received at the DDS
- Assigned to a disability examiner
- Requests for medical and non-medical evidence are generated
- Disability examiner reviews and analyzes evidence received
- Consultation with staff physician and psychologist
- Consultative examination may be necessary if medical evidence is insufficient
- Medical determination made based on evidence received
- Disability claim is returned to local Social Security field office

HOW THE DECISION IS MADE:

- Medical determination is made by a team, comprised of a physician and/or psychologist and trained disability examiner
- Medical evidence from doctors, hospitals and clinics is reviewed and analyzed
- An individual's age, education, past work experience and functional limitations are considered
- For children's claims schools, teachers, case managers and other sources may be contacted for additional evidence to be considered with medical evidence.

KEY FACTORS TO THE DECISION:

- The documentation of the medical impairment(s) must be sufficiently complete for the DDS to evaluate severity, functional restrictions, and expected duration of the impairment(s).
- Partial or temporary disabilities that are recognized in many benefit programs may not qualify for SSDI or SSI.

- A doctor's opinion that an individual is unable to work is not sufficient for a determination of eligibility. The impairment must be demonstrated through medical signs, symptoms, and laboratory or other test findings.

HOW YOU CAN ASSIST WITH THE DISABILITY PROCESS:

Individuals may apply for SSDI or SSI benefits by calling SSA's toll-free number (1-800-772-1213) or visiting a local Social Security office or via the Internet at www.SSA.gov. The applicant's cooperation in providing the information below will assist in the processing of the claim:

- The date work stopped and a description of how the impairment(s) prevents work.
- A list of doctors and hospitals, with dates of treatment, addresses, and telephone numbers.
- Copies of medical records the applicant may have in his/her possession at time of filing.
- A thorough description of the applicant's work history, including dates worked and duties performed.
- If the application is for a child, copies of report cards, IEPs, ARD conferences, and psychological reports.
- Any change in address, telephone number, or medical condition.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT DDS:

The DDS's Medical Relations Office can provide more information to health practitioners, advocates, school personnel, and citizens.

Physicians, psychologists, and speech and language therapists who wish to perform consultative examinations for DDS may also contact the Medical Relations Office.

Medical Relations Office
Disability Determination Services
PO Box 6338
Timonium, MD 21094-6338
Phone: 410-308-4335
Toll free: 1-800-492-4283 x 4335
TDD: 410-308-4550
FAX: 410-308-4300
email: md.dd.timonium.dds@ssa.gov
Internet: www.dors.state.md.us

MSDE NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, creed, gender identity and expression, genetic information, marital status, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs. For inquiries related to MSDE's Non-Discrimination policy, please contact the Equity Assurance and Compliance Office, 410-767-0433 (voice), 410-333-6442 (TTY/TDD). For more information about the contents of this document, contact 410-308-4336.